

STATE OF MAINE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 96-440

December 15, 1998

NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH  
COMPANY D/B/A NYNEX  
1996 Annual Filing Under  
Alternative Form of Regulation

MODIFICATION OF ORDER  
CONCERNING NUMBER OF  
SIGNIFICANT DIGITS TO BE  
USED IN SQI CALCULATION

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WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

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New England Telephone & Telegraph Company d/b/a Bell Atlantic (f/k/a NYNEX) has requested that we modify our Order (Part II) of March 6, 1997 in the above-captioned proceeding. That Order considered and approved Bell Atlantic's annual filing under its alternative form of regulation (AFOR), and also approved Bell Atlantic's calculation of the annual service quality index (SQI) that we ordered in conjunction with the AFOR. In the March 6, 1997 Order we required Bell Atlantic in future annual AFOR filings to "use three significant digits for all SQI data. For individual SQI category baselines where three significant digits are not available for the 1992 to 1995 period initially used for baseline calculations, [Bell Atlantic] shall recalculate and report those baselines using the most recent data available." Order (Part II) at 8. In its request to modify the March 6, 1997 Order, Bell Atlantic claims that it is not able to comply with the Order for several of the indices. We grant Bell Atlantic's request for modification.

Pursuant to Chapter 110, § 1004, motions to reconsider or modify our orders must be filed within 20 days after the order has been issued. Under 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1321 the Commission has authority on its own motion to "rescind, alter an amend any order it has made . . . ." We will exercise that authority in this proceeding. Section 1321 requires the Commission to provide notice and an opportunity to present argument or evidence (as the Commission determines appropriate) to all parties in the original proceeding. The only party in the original proceeding, other than Bell Atlantic, was the Public Advocate. Notice has been provided to the Public Advocate in the form of a draft of this order, prepared by the Commission Staff. The Public Advocate stated that it did not oppose the proposed modification.

The Service Quality Index (SQI) is a composite of 12 performance measurement categories established when the

Commission adopted the AFOR for NYNEX in 1995.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the Commission's 1997 order that Bell Atlantic use three significant digits for all SQI categories, Bell Atlantic stated that it is "able to comply with that request" for five SQI categories. The five categories for which Bell Atlantic stated it could comply with this requirement are:

- percentage of installation appointments not met (company reasons)
- held orders (average total delay days)
- customer trouble reports per 100 access lines
- percentage of trouble reports not cleared within 24 hours - residence
- service outages

Bell Atlantic stated it is not able to comply with the three significant digit requirement on seven SQI categories, for the following reasons:

- percentage of business office calls answered over 20 seconds

Bell Atlantic stated that its Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) records "the number of calls answered in a given time frame . . . only by results . . . and only in two digits." Bell Atlantic stated that "this degree of precision on this measurement is adequate relative to the additional expense of supplying a new report to the Commission."

- percentage of calls with dial tone speed over 3 seconds

Bell Atlantic stated that this data is computer generated, with data reported only to four decimal places (e.g., .0004). The initial baseline for this category is 0.04% (or .0004), thus not enabling further precision without a system upgrade. Bell Atlantic stated that its current reporting (to a precision of one significant digit) "is very precise and well within the objective of the Commission to track a meaningful benchmark for service quality."

- percentage of trouble reports not cleared within 24 hours - business

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<sup>1</sup>See Public Utilities Commission, Investigation Into Regulatory Alternatives for the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company d/b/a NYNEX, Order (May 15, 1995) at 68-87.

Bell Atlantic stated that clearing of trouble reports, for which the business baseline in Maine is 9.0, "is tracked to one decimal place throughout Operations."

- percentage of customers surveyed reporting service provisioning not meeting expectations - residence
- percentage of customers surveyed reporting service provisioning not meeting expectations - business
- percentage of customers surveyed reporting maintenance not meeting expectations - residence
- percentage of customers surveyed reporting maintenance not meeting expectations - business

These four categories derive from customer surveys ("TELSAM") in which 50 customer interviews are conducted monthly. Because of the small sample, Bell Atlantic stated that one significant digit "is the most precise answer available" in most circumstances, and that "[t]he TELSAM indexes as tracked are perfectly reasonable for the Commission's purpose to measure service quality."

Bell Atlantic has presented reasonable grounds for modifying the Order, and we modify it as requested. If Bell Atlantic makes future systems upgrades that would enable it to report this information using three significant digits, Bell Atlantic shall notify the Commission within 20 days of such a change so that the Commission can consider modification of this Order.

Wherefore, we

#### O R D E R

1. That Bell Atlantic shall report Service Quality Index data using three significant digits for all SQI categories where such reporting is possible, as identified in the body of this Order; and,

2. That Bell Atlantic shall report Service Quality Index data using the greatest number of significant digits possible, when reporting using three significant digits is not possible, as described in the body of this Order.

Dated at Augusta, Maine this 15th day of December, 1998.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

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Dennis L. Keschl  
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR:      Nugent  
   Diamond

COMMISSIONER ABSENT:            Welch